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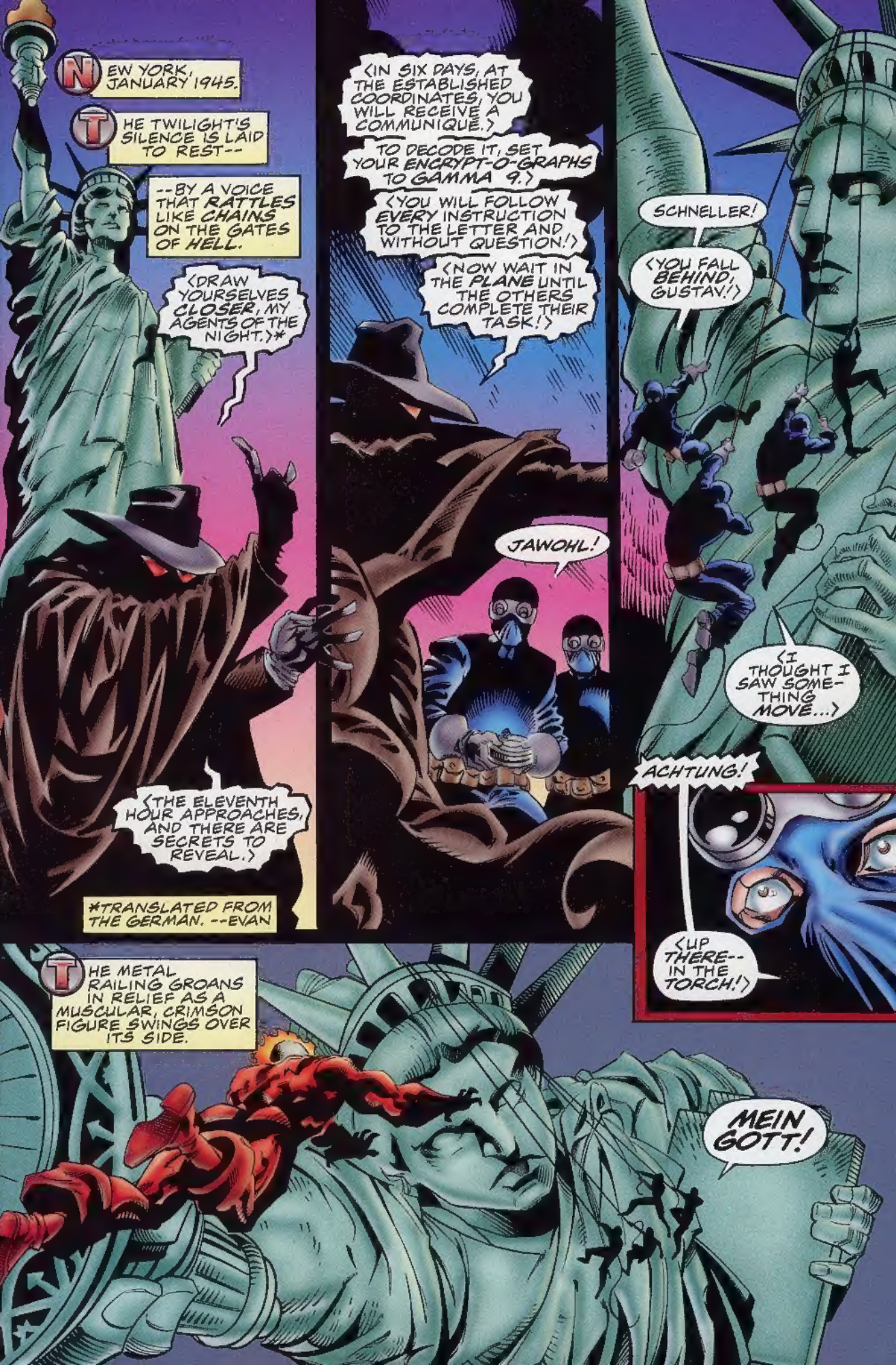
NEW YORK, JANUARY 1945.
THE TWILIGHT'S SILENCE IS LAID TO REST--
--BY A VOICE THAT RATTLES LIKE CHAINS ON THE GATES OF HELL.
<DRAW YOURSELVES CLOSER, MY AGENTS OF THE NIGHT.>*
<THE ELEVENTH HOUR APPROACHES, AND THERE ARE SECRETS TO REVEAL.>
*TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN. --EVAN
<IN SIX DAYS, AT THE ESTABLISHED COORDINATES, YOU WILL RECEIVE A COMMUNIQUÉ.>
TO DECODE IT, SET YOUR ENCRYPT-O-GRAPHS TO GAMMA 9.>
<YOU WILL FOLLOW EVERY INSTRUCTION TO THE LETTER AND WITHOUT QUESTION!>
<NOW WAIT IN THE PLANE UNTIL THE OTHERS COMPLETE THEIR TASK!>
JAWOHL!
SCHNELLER!
<YOU FALL BEHIND, GUSTAV!>
<I THOUGHT I SAW SOMETHING MOVE...>
ACHTUNG!
<UP THERE-- IN THE TORCH!>
THE METAL RAILING GROANS IN RELIEF AS A MUSCULAR, CRIMSON FIGURE SWINGS OVER ITS SIDE.
MEIN GOTT!

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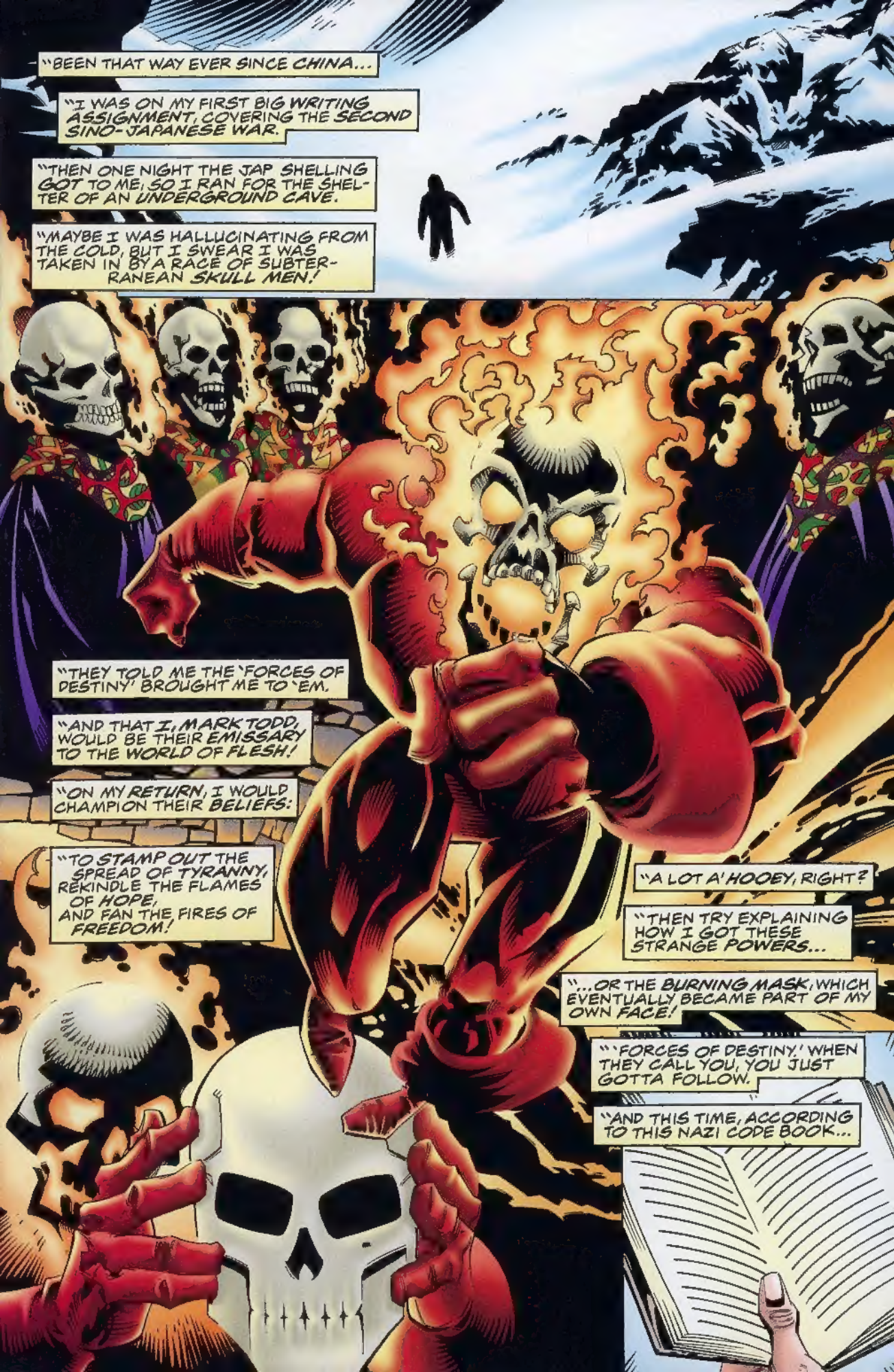
WHEN YOU TAKE LIBERTIES WITH THIS LADY--
--YOU ANSWER TO ME!
WHAM
KRAK
UNGLAUBLICH! WITHIN SECONDS, THAT ACCURSED AMERIKANER HAS DEFEATED MY FINEST MEN!
BUT IT IS NO MATTER!
HAVE YOUR LITTLE VICTORY TODAY, BLAZING SKULL.
FOR EVEN YOU CANNOT STOP THE EVENTS THAT I HAVE SET IN MOTION!
REST ASSURED THE FINAL OUTCOME SHALL BELONG TO THE MASKED RAIDER...

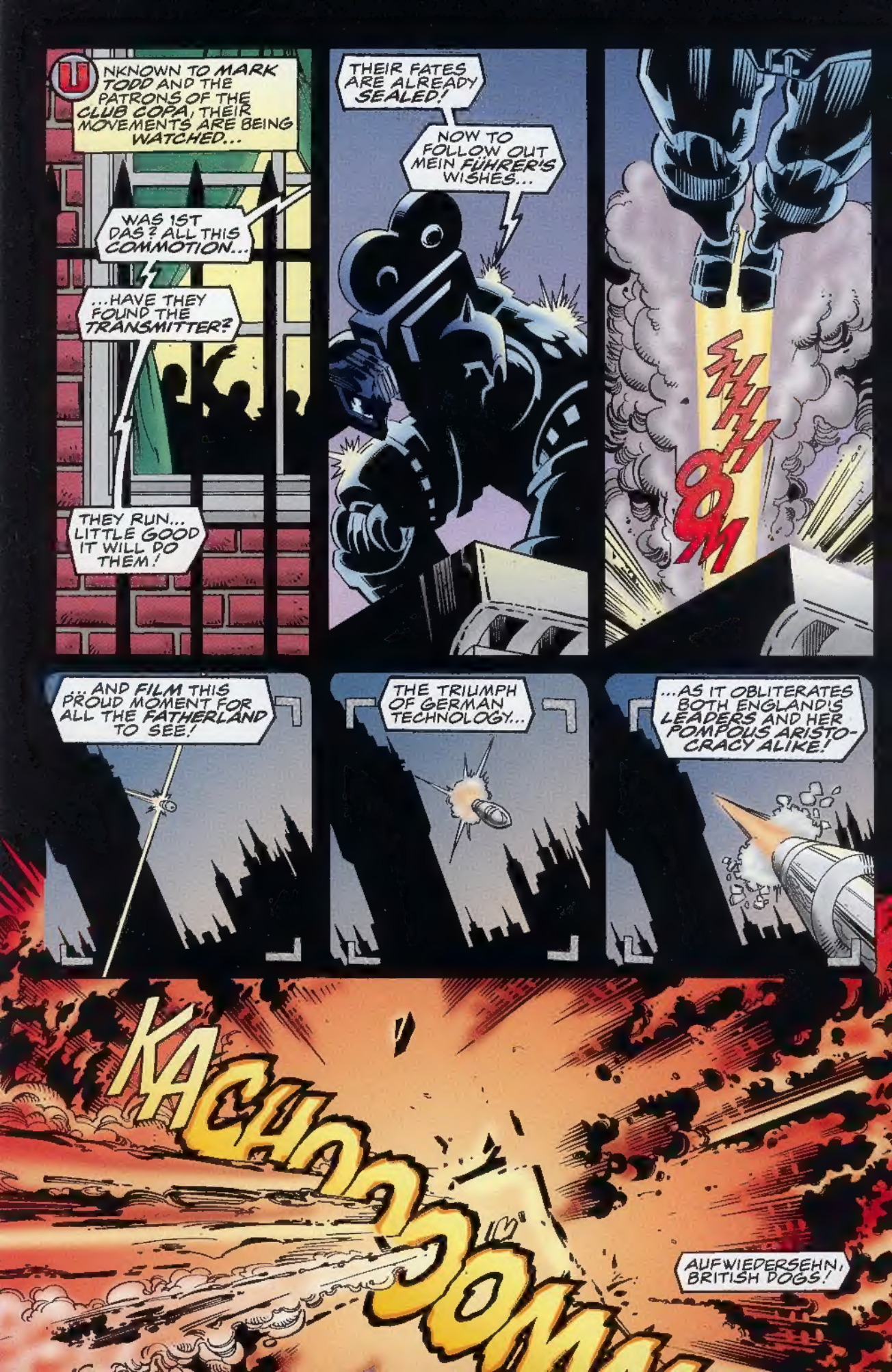
"...AND TO THE GLORIOUS POWERS OF THE THIRD REICH!"
AIN'T THAT JUST LIKE A RATZI TO TURN TAIL?!
COME BACK HERE AND FIGHT LIKE A MAN, YAH NO-ACCOUNT KRAUT!
AH WELL, AS SOON AS YOU BOYS WAKE UP, WE'RE GONNA HAVE OURSELVES A NICE LITTLE CHAT.
'N' THEN WE'LL SEE IF I CAN PUT ANY OF IT TO GOOD USE...
"...AS ACE REPORTER, MARK TODD!"
WUXTREE! WUXTREE! READ ALL ABOUT IT!
BUZZ BOMBS BLAST BRIT BUILDINGS!
DAILY GLOBE

HEY, MR. TODD! BABS AND OL' MAN SCHMIDT SAID YOU'D BE COMIN' BY!
SO WHAT KINDA EVIL RATZI PLOT ARE YOU ONTO NOW?!
A SUPER-SECRET SPY RING, VIRG.
HOLY SMOKES!
"MY SENTIMENTS, TOO. NOW LET'S SEE HOW SCHMITTY FEELS ABOUT IT!"
ACCORDING TO MY SOURCES, THE BLAZING SKULL GOT WIND THAT FRITZ WAS GONNA STRAP A MINI-TRANSMITTER ON...
...GET THIS...
...THE TOP A' LADY LIBERTY HERSELF!
ALVIN SCHMIDT SR. EDITOR
...JUST WHAT THE WORLD NEEDS--
--MORE JERKS SENDING WRONG SIGNALS THROUGH A GAL'S HEAD.
DAILY GLOBE
CAP BUSTS NA SPY RIN
JOKE ALL YOU WANT, BABS. MAKES PERFECT SENSE TO ME.
FACT, I'M SURE THAT TIARA OF HERS IS GREAT FOR RECEPTION!
LISTEN, TODD, HALF THE STORIES YA SHILL ME SOUND LIKE THEY CAME OUTTA VIRGIL'S FUNNYBOOKS.
AND THE STATE DEPARTMENT WON'T LET ME RUN THE REST OF 'EM 'CAUSE THEY'RE SO TOP &#*!-ING SECRET!
WHY WON'TCHA JUST STICK TO THE BEATS I ASSIGN YA?!
BETTER SPEAK YOUR PIECE, MARK, WHILE WE CAN STILL HEAR YOU OVER SCHMITTY'S ULCER.
LOOK, CHIEF, FOR MONTHS FRITZ HAS BEEN SNEAKING DOZENS A' CODED MESSAGES TO THEIR AMERICAN SPIES.
SO FAR, NO ONE'S FIGURED OUT HOW THEY'RE DOIN' IT.
BUT ME? I'M SO CLOSE, I'M STARTIN' TO HEAR "DEUTSCH" IN MY SLEEP!
ALL RIGHT, TODD... WHAT'VE YOU GOT?

WHAT I'VE GOT IS A BUNCH OF BUND BRIC-A-BRAC THE KRAUTS LEFT BEHIND ON LIBERTY ISLAND.
A CIPHERING DEVICE, A CODE BOOK, AND ONE A' THOSE TRANSMITTERS I TOLD YOU ABOUT.
SURE, YOU COULD FIT ITS BANDWIDTH IN A BOX A' CRACKERJACKS...
...BUT IMAGINE A WEB OF THESE PLACED ON ROOFTOPS ACROSS THE CITY...
STATUE OF LIBERTY 5-18-44
DAILY
AND WHAT?! YOU GOT A RATZI RADIO NETWORK?!
PLEASE, TODD, GIVE ME SOMETHIN' BETTER THAN THAT!
HOW ABOUT A TIME AND PLACE FRITZ'LL STRIKE NEXT?
IT'S THE LAST ENTRY IN THIS HERE CODE BOOK.
THE CLUB COPA, TWO DAYS FROM NOW.
IF I HOP A PLANE TONIGHT, I CAN JUST MAKE IT!
THE COPA? THAT'S IN LONDON, TODD!
BE SURE TO SAY HI TO THE QUEEN FOR ME!
OH NO! HE'S NOT GOIN' TO LONDON!
NOT ON MY SHOESTRING, HE DON'T!
CHIEF?
WHAT?!
"CHEERIO!"
"POOR SCHMITTY.. WHEN'LL HE LEARN?
"I CAN'T DANCE HIS LITTLE DANCE.
"MY CARD'S ALREADY BEEN FILLED...
"...BY A LITTLE LADY NAMED FATE!
LONDON


"BEEN THAT WAY EVER SINCE CHINA...
"I WAS ON MY FIRST BIG WRITING ASSIGNMENT, COVERING THE SECOND SINO-JAPANESE WAR.
"THEN ONE NIGHT THE JAP SHELLING GOT TO ME; SO I RAN FOR THE SHELTER OF AN UNDERGROUND CAVE.
"MAYBE I WAS HALLUCINATING FROM THE COLD, BUT I SWEAR I WAS TAKEN IN BY A RACE OF SUBTERRANEAN SKULL MEN!
"THEY TOLD ME THE 'FORCES OF DESTINY' BROUGHT ME TO 'EM.
"AND THAT I, MARK TODD, WOULD BE THEIR EMISSARY TO THE WORLD OF FLESH!
"ON MY RETURN, I WOULD CHAMPION THEIR BELIEFS:
"TO STAMP OUT THE SPREAD OF TYRANNY, REKINDLE THE FLAMES OF HOPE, AND FAN THE FIRES OF FREEDOM!
"A LOT A' HOOEY, RIGHT?
"THEN TRY EXPLAINING HOW I GOT THESE STRANGE POWERS...
"...OR THE BURNING MASK, WHICH EVENTUALLY BECAME PART OF MY OWN FACE!
"'FORCES OF DESTINY,' WHEN THEY CALL YOU, YOU JUST GOTTA FOLLOW.
"AND THIS TIME, ACCORDING TO THIS NAZI CODE BOOK...

"...THEY'RE LEADING ME TO PICCADILLY CIRCUS...
"...AND THE CLUB COPA."
QUITE A BASH, BRIAN. EVERYONE WHO'S ANYONE IS HERE...
..EVEN OL' EROS, HIMSELF!
HOWEVER DID YOU PULL THAT OFF?
THE FALSWORTHS HAVE ALWAYS HAD FRIENDS IN HIGH PLACES.
AND WITH THE PROCEEDS ALL GOING TO OUR BRAVE BOYS AT THE FRONT...
...WHO WOULDN'T GIVE THEIR ALL?
'ERE, LORD FALSWORTH.
WE FOUND THIS CODGER TRYIN' TO SNEAK 'IMSELF IN.
I TAKE IT OUR FRIEND DOESN'T HAVE AN INVITATION?
NOT UNLESS YOU COUNT MY PRESS PASS, PAL.
NAME'S TODD. MARK TODD, REPORTER FOR THE DAILY GLOBE.
SO YOU'RE THE ONE WHO WRITES THOSE INCREDULOUS...
...SORRY...
...INCREDIBLE STORIES ABOUT THAT AMERICAN ADVENTURER, THE BLAZING SKULL.
BEATS NOT WORKING FOR A LIVIN', MR. FALSWORTH.
LORD FALSWORTH ... AND HOW CAN I HELP YOU?
GOT THE SKIVVY THAT FRITZ IS PLANNING SOMETHING SPECIAL FOR YOUR SHINDIG TONIGHT.
MIGHT EVEN MAKE IT THE NEXT TARGET FOR THEIR NEW BLITZ.
NOT POSSIBLE, CHUM.
VEET VEET VEET
AIR RAID SIRENS WOULD'VE SOUNDED IF THERE WAS A BOMBING RUN TONIGHT.
WILLIN' TO RISK IT, PAL?
MM...YOU MAY HAVE A POINT THERE...


UNKNOWN TO MARK TODD AND THE PATRONS OF THE CLUB COPA, THEIR MOVEMENTS ARE BEING WATCHED...
WAS IST DAS? ALL THIS COMMOTION...
...HAVE THEY FOUND THE TRANSMITTER?
THEY RUN... LITTLE GOOD IT WILL DO THEM!
THEIR FATES ARE ALREADY SEALED!
NOW TO FOLLOW OUT MEIN FÜHRER'S WISHES...
SHHOOM
...AND FILM THIS PROUD MOMENT FOR ALL THE FATHERLAND TO SEE!
THE TRIUMPH OF GERMAN TECHNOLOGY...
...AS IT OBLITERATES BOTH ENGLAND'S LEADERS AND HER POMPOUS ARISTOCRACY ALIKE!
KACHOOOM
AUFWIEDERSEHN, BRITISH DOGS!

CHAPTER 2
The IRON MENACE
THE BUZZ BOMB RAZES THE CLUB TO ITS FOUNDATION--
--STARTING A BLAZE WHICH THREATENS TO IGNITE THE ENTIRE WEST END!
BRIAN!
DEAR GOD, HAS ANYONE SEEN BRIAN FALSWORTH?
RIGHT HERE, LUV.
THAT AMERICAN AND I WERE GETTING THE LAST OF THE STRAGGLERS OUT THE BACK WHEN IT HIT.
HE DIDN'T MAKE IT OUT?! STONE THE CROWS!
GET EVERYONE CLEAR OF THIS BLAZE--
AMERICAN? WHAT AMERICAN?
--I'M GOING FOR HELP!
BOOOMM

ALL RIGHT.. UNF...WHO'S THE WISE GUY?
WHO DROPPED A HOUSE ON ME?
KREEK
CHOOM
THAT WOULD BE ME, LITTLE GEIST...
...THE IRON CROSS!
YEAH? WELL, GET IT RIGHT, FRITZ!
IT WAS DOROTHY WHO DROPPED HOUSES ON PEOPLE.
THE TIN MAN'S THE GUY WHO NEEDED A HEART.
BUT WHEN I'M DONE WITH YA, ALL YER GONNA NEED--
--IS A PINE BOX!
THUD

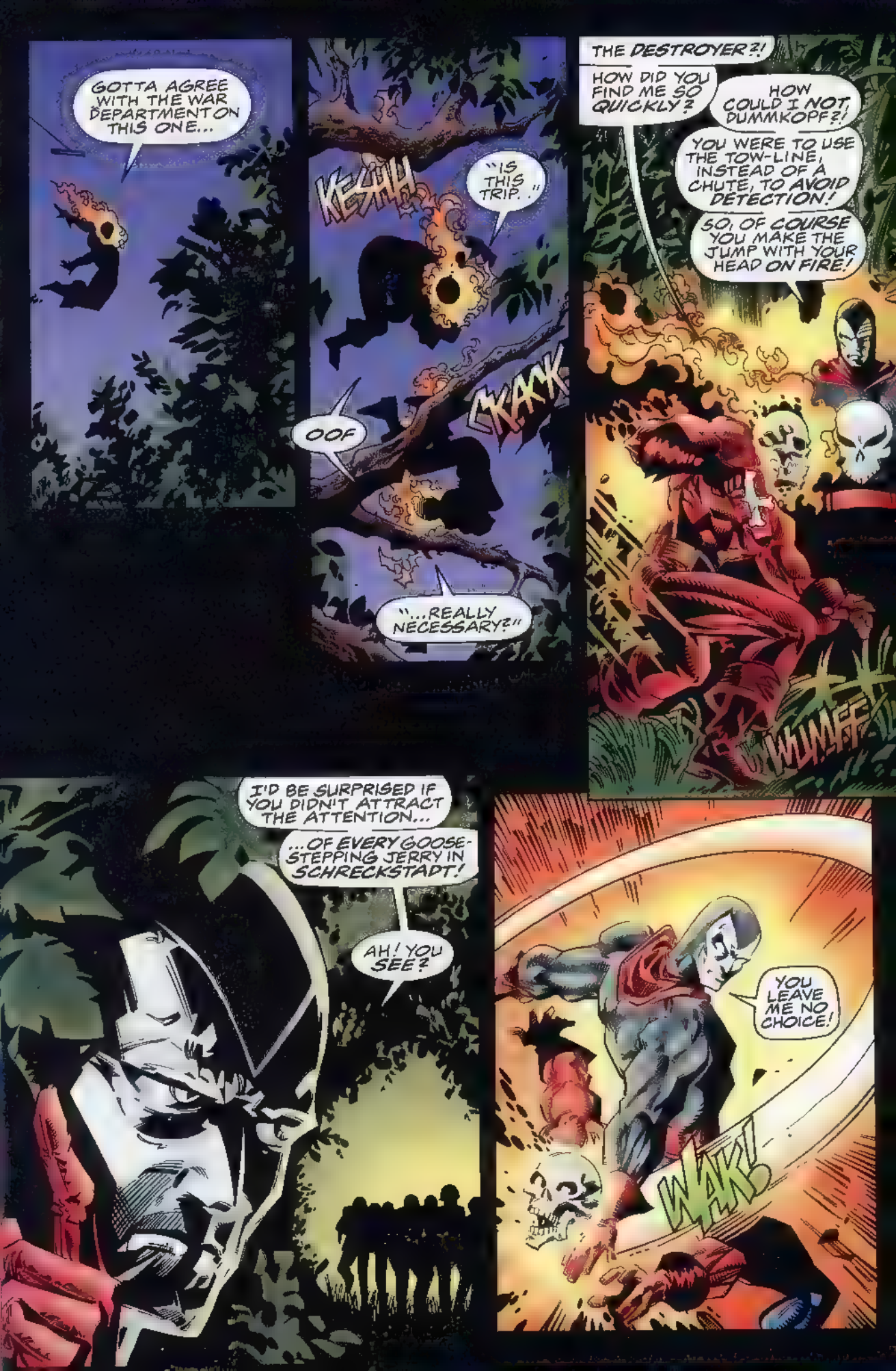
¢%#$!
YOU AMERICANS --ALWAYS TALKING!
CLONK
KEERRAK
LET ME SHOW YOU HOW GERMANS SPEAK--
WITH ACTION!
WELL, IF THAT'S THE CASE, JERRY...
...YOU SHOULD "HEAR" WHAT UNION JACK HAS TO "SAY"!!

I'M SURE YOU'LL FIND IT POSITIVELY SHOCKING!
ZZRAK
ANYTHING YOU'D CARE TO ADD TO THE CONVERSATION, SKULL?
IF IT'S ALL RIGHT WITH YOU, JACK.
...THOUGHT I'D PARAPHRASE MY PRESIDENT'S FIFTH COUSIN...
...BY SPEAKING SOFTLY...
...'N' CARRYING A BIG &%#@-ING STICK!
KLANG
GOD AND COUNTRY! HE'S NOT EVEN STUNNED!
ANY IDEAS, LIMEY?
NONE THAT DON'T INVOLVE A BLOODY BIG TANK!

HOW EASY IT WOULD BE TO DISPATCH YOU BOTH-- GRIND YOUR BONES TO POWDER...
KHOOOM
YOU AIN'T GETTIN' AWAY THAT EASY, KRAUT!
...BUT I HAVE WASTED ENOUGH TIME ON YOU PATHETIC ALLIES!
C'MON, JACKSON, TELL ME ONE OF US IS FLYIN' AFTER HIM.
THAT WOULDN'T BE ME, CHUM.
ALL I DO IS MAKE ELECTRICAL BURSTS.
YOU?
IMPERVIOUSNESS TO FLAME.
IMPERVIOUSNESS TO...
YEAH, YEAH--SO IT'S A STUPID POWER!
QUITE THE CONTRARY FRIEND.
RIGHT NOW, YOURS IS A TALENT THAT IS SORELY NEEDED!
COME ON, SKULL, LET'S GET CRACKING!
BE RIGHT WITH YOU, UJ!
IT SEEMS OL' IRON PUSS LEFT US A LIL' PRESENT!

LATER, AT UNION JACK'S SECRET HEADQUARTERS, BENEATH FALSWORTH MANOR...
NEVER DID GET THESE GERMAN PICTURES.
GIMME BING CROSBY OVER BAUHAUS ANY DAY!
I'D WAGER THE IRON CROSS SHOT THIS FOR HITLER'S WEHRMACHT.
CHANCE FOR THEM TO SEE THEIR NEW BUZZ-BOMB IN ACTION!
A PRIVILEGE WHICH NOW BELONGS TO US.
YEAH, FOR ALL THE GOOD IT'LL DO!
HOLD ON! I'VE SEEN THAT SKYLINE DURING ONE OF MY MISSIONS BEHIND ENEMY LINES!
THAT MISSILE WAS LAUNCHED FROM THE GERMAN TOWN OF SCHRECKSTADT!
WITH MY NEW AIRSHIP, I CAN GET YOU THERE IN A MATTER OF HOURS!
BUT FIRST, LET'S SEE IF WE CAN DRUM UP A LITTLE HELP FROM ONE OF THE "LOCALS."
SCHOOL CHUM TO POLO PARTNER. COME IN.
HALLO, MEIN FREUND IT'S BEEN A WHILE.
HOW CAN I BE OF SERVICE?
A FRIEND IS ABOUT TO DROP IN UN-ANNOUNCED.
THOUGHT YOU MIGHT SHOW HIM THE SIGHTS, AT COORDINATES 12-J-8.
E.T.A. TWENTY-TWO HUNDRED. SCHOOL CHUM OUT.
HOT DOG! A NIGHT FLIGHT TO DEUTSCH-LAND!
OKAY, AXIS, HERE WE COME!

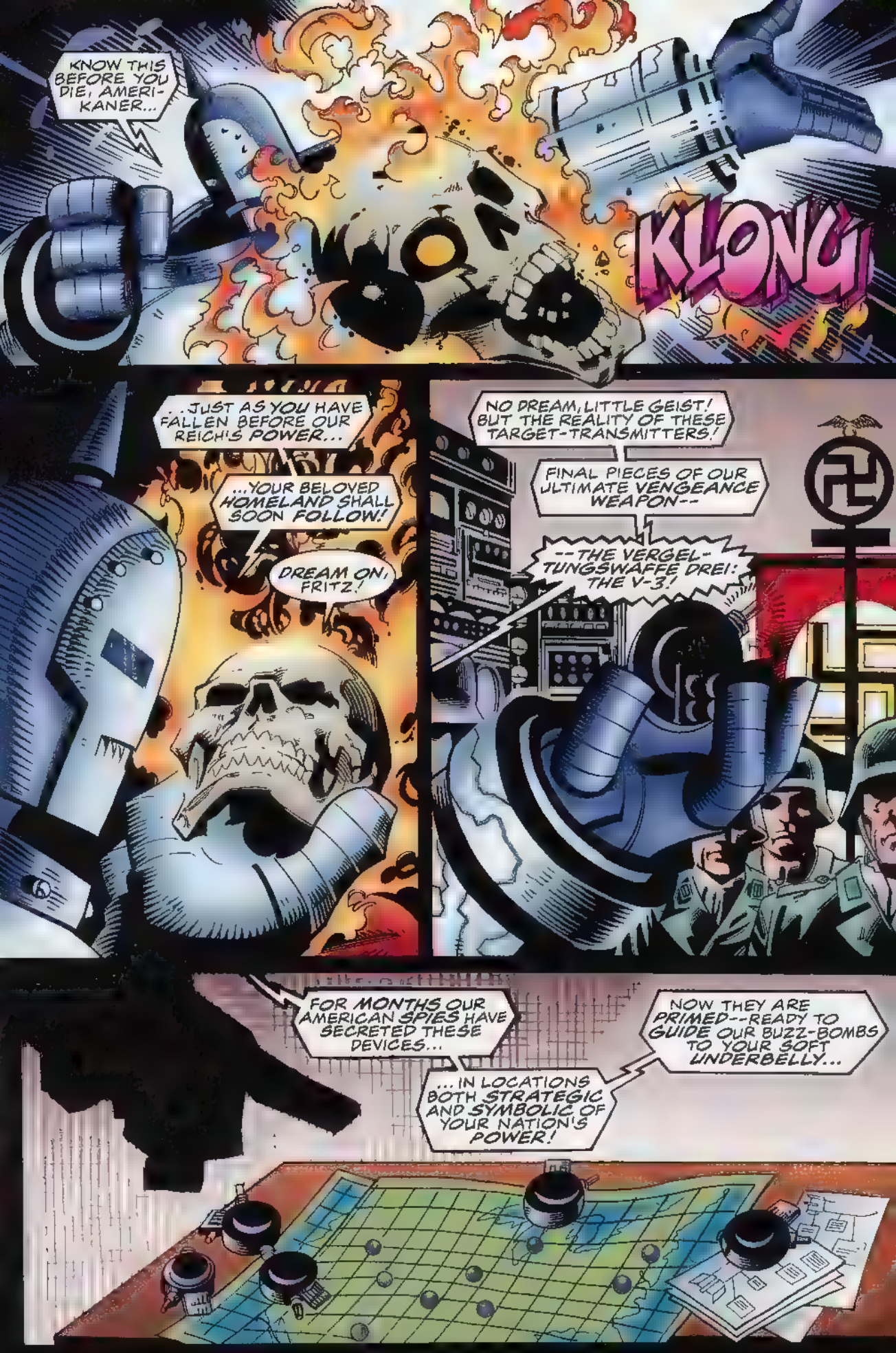
WITHIN MINUTES, UNION JACK'S AIRSHIP, THE INFILTRATOR, IS RACING TOWARDS THE HEART OF THE FATHERLAND.
ITS BELLY PRACTICALLY SCRAPES THE GROUND TO AVOID ENEMY RADAR
SCHRECKSTADT
I WISH I WERE JOINING YOU ON THIS ONE, SKULL.
BUT WITH A RENEWED BLITZ BACK ON, UNION JACK IS NEEDED ON THE HOME FRONT.
I LEAVE YOU IN GOOD HANDS, THOUGH. EVER HEARD OF THE MIGHTY DESTROYER?
THAT NUTCASE?!
OH, I'VE HEARD OF HIM, ALL RIGHT!
THE ONLY ALLIED MYSTERY MAN WHO'S SET UP CAMP INSIDE ENEMY TERRITORY!
WORD HAS IT, HE'S SPENT SO MUCH TIME UNDERCOVER--
--THAT HE'S GONE OVER TO THE OTHER SIDE!
ALL RUMOR! THE DESTROYER IS AS BRAVE AND LOYAL AS THEY COME!
ON THAT, YOU HAVE MY WORD!
NOW LOOK ALIVE! WE'RE AT THE DROP SITE!
THE BOMB DOORS DROP OPEN, AND THE BLAZING SKULL ARCS TOWARD THE GROUND--
--WITH NOTHING BUT A TAUT CABLE TOW-LINE TO SLOW HIS DESCENT!


GOTTA AGREE WITH THE WAR DEPARTMENT ON THIS ONE...
KESHH
"IS THIS TRIP..."
OOF
KRACK
"...REALLY NECESSARY?"
THE DESTROYER?!
HOW DID YOU FIND ME SO QUICKLY?
HOW COULD I NOT, DUMMKOPF?!
YOU WERE TO USE THE TOW-LINE, INSTEAD OF A CHUTE, TO AVOID DETECTION!
SO, OF COURSE YOU MAKE THE JUMP WITH YOUR HEAD ON FIRE!
WUMFF
I'D BE SURPRISED IF YOU DIDN'T ATTRACT THE ATTENTION...
...OF EVERY GOOSE-STEPPING JERRY IN SCHRECKSTADT!
AH! YOU SEE?
YOU LEAVE ME NO CHOICE!
WAK!

WOMP
WHAT TH' BLAZES DO YOU THINK YOU'RE--
UMPHH
RAKK
KLAK
WHY YOU DIRTY-DEALIN', BACK-STABBIN', LOUSY GOOD-FOR-NOTHIN',
SCUM-SUCKIN' PIECE-A-KRAUT TRASH!
FWIP
FWIP
FWIP
PONK
(GENTLEMEN, JUST AS I PROMISED--)
(--THE BLAZING SKULL WILL INTERFERE IN YOUR PLANS NO MORE.)
I'M GONNA GETCHA FOR THIS, YA PINSTRIPE-PANTED RATZI!
BET ON IT!

CHAPTER 3 THE DOUBLE CROSS

THE BLAZING SKULL HAS BEEN IN TIGHT SPOTS BEFORE...
..BUT THE ODDS WERE NEVER SO GREAT AS THOSE NOW...
...ALONE AND BOUND IN SCHRECKSTADT!
AH, THE LITTLE GEIST WHO TROUBLED ME SO IN BRITAIN!
YOU HAVE COME A LONG WAY JUST TO DIE, HERR SKULL!
AND YOU, DESTROYER-- I HAD HEARD THAT YOU HAD JOINED OUR RANKS, BUT I COULDN'T BELIEVE--
THEN LET THIS PUT YOUR FEARS TO REST, HERR CROSS
IT'S ALL A SCAM! WE'RE IN IT TOGETHER!
GOT HALF A BRAIN, YOU'LL OPEN FIRE ON US BOTH RIGHT NOW!
BIT OF A BAD LOSER, AREN'T WE?
BETTER THAN A STINKIN' KRAUT!


KNOW THIS BEFORE YOU DIE, AMERI-KANER...
KLONG
...JUST AS YOU HAVE FALLEN BEFORE OUR REICH'S POWER...
...YOUR BELOVED HOMELAND SHALL SOON FOLLOW!
DREAM ON, FRITZ!
NO DREAM, LITTLE GEIST! BUT THE REALITY OF THESE TARGET-TRANSMITTERS!
FINAL PIECES OF OUR ULTIMATE VENGEANCE WEAPON--
--THE VERGEL-TUNGSWAFFE DREI: THE V-3!
FOR MONTHS OUR AMERICAN SPIES HAVE SECRETED THESE DEVICES...
...IN LOCATIONS BOTH STRATEGIC AND SYMBOLIC OF YOUR NATION'S POWER!
NOW THEY ARE PRIMED--READY TO GUIDE OUR BUZZ-BOMBS TO YOUR SOFT UNDERBELLY...

..AND BRING THE WAR TO AMERICAN SHORES!
ALREADY WE HAVE A LAUNCH SITE WITHIN STRIKING DISTANCE ARMED AND FULLY OPERATIONAL!
ALL OF IT CONSTRUCTED UNDER YOUR STUPID AMERICAN NOSES!
AFTER A FURIOUS SEARCH, AND A FEW HASTY PREPARATIONS...
..THE DESTROYER FINDS A CACHE OF V-3S, AND QUICKLY GOES TO WORK.
TEKK
TEKK
TEKK
NOW TO HURRY BACK BEFORE ANYONE REALIZES...
KLIK-IK
...I'M GONE.
KLIK
KLIK
KLIK

(HERR CROSS, IT SEEMS YOUR GUEST HAS AN INTEREST IN OUR NEW REICHS-WEAPONS.)
(A VERY UNHEALTHY INTEREST, AT THAT.)
A VIPER IN MY MIDST?
LET ME SHOW YOU, HERR DESTROYER...
...HOW I TEND TO THE SNAKES IN MY GARDEN!
NEIN!
(ONCE AND FOR ALL I SHALL PROVE MY LOYALTY TO THE REICH...)
MEIN FLAMMEN-WERFER..
(...BY INCINERATING THIS ACCURSED AMERICAN!)
FWOOSH

HA HA HA!
WAS ZUM TEUFEL!
IMPER-VIOUSNESS TO FLAME!
NOT SUCH A STUPID POWER, AFTER ALL, EH?
BUT YOU KNEW THAT, DIDN'TCHA, DESTROYER?
WELL DONE, KID!
NO, THIS IS WELL DONE!
FWOOSH
EEYEE!!
YOU KEEP 'EM BUSY, PINSTRIPES...
...WHILE I GRAB THE GOODS!
GOT IT!
WHAT NOW?!
UP AHEAD, SKULL!
I'VE PREPARED THE MEANS FOR OUR ESCAPE!

SORRY ABOUT THE THRASHING I GAVE YOU EARLIER
.. BUT IT WAS THE ONLY WAY I COULD GET YOU ON THE INSIDE!
KCHOW KPOW
KPAW POW
YEAH YEAH. SURE SURE
I'M DRIVIN'
FINE BY ME.
KA-CHAKK
I'LL RIDE SHOT-GUN!
CHOOM
RCHOW

HERR CROSS! SOMETHING HAS GONE HORRIBLY WRONG!
ONE OF THE VERGELTUNGSWAFFE HAS BEEN SET TO EXPLODE!
DEAL WITH IT, DOKTOR!
KHOOOM
JUST AS I SHALL DEAL--
--WITH OUR MEDDLESOME FOES!
ACH! THERE IS NO TIME TO DEFUSE HER!
OUR ONLY HOPE IS TO LAUNCH...
"...AND PRAY SHE CLEARS THE BASE, BEFORE SHE DESTROYS US ALL!"
WHSH
NOW WHERE'VE I HEARD THAT SOUND BEFORE?!
VEET
IT'S ONE A' THOSE TARGET-TRANSMITTERS I SWIPED!
WAIT A SEC! THAT MEANS... OH *¢£i#!
VEET

PREPARE TO DIE, ALLIED SWINE!
WE'RE SLOWING DOWN, SKULL!
DON'T RATION THE PETROL ON MY ACCOUNT!
BRATTA BRATTA
WE ALL GOT TO DO OUR PART FOR THE WAR, PINSTRIPES!
NOW WATCH CLOSELY..
...'N' I'LL SHOW YOU HOW TO START A SCRAP METAL DRIVE!
DUMMKOPF!
HAVE YOU NOT YET LEARNED ? YOUR PATHETIC BLOWS MEAN NOTHING TO THE IRON CR--
WAS?!
YEE EET EET

NEIN!! NEIIIINN!!
KAGHOOOOM!
"WELL, WITH ALL THE BOMBS, MISSILES, 'N' MUNITIONS IN THE BASE...
"DIDN'T TAKE MORE THAN THAT ONE BLAST TO BRING THE WHOLE PLACE DOWN LIKE A HOUSE A'CARDS!"
"BUT, GEE, MR. TODD, THEN HOW'D THE BLAZIN' SKULL 'N' THE DESTROYER SURVIVE?"
"WELL, VIRG, I GUESS THE FORCE OF THE BLAST THREW 'EM CLEAR FROM THE REST OF THE DESTRUCTION."

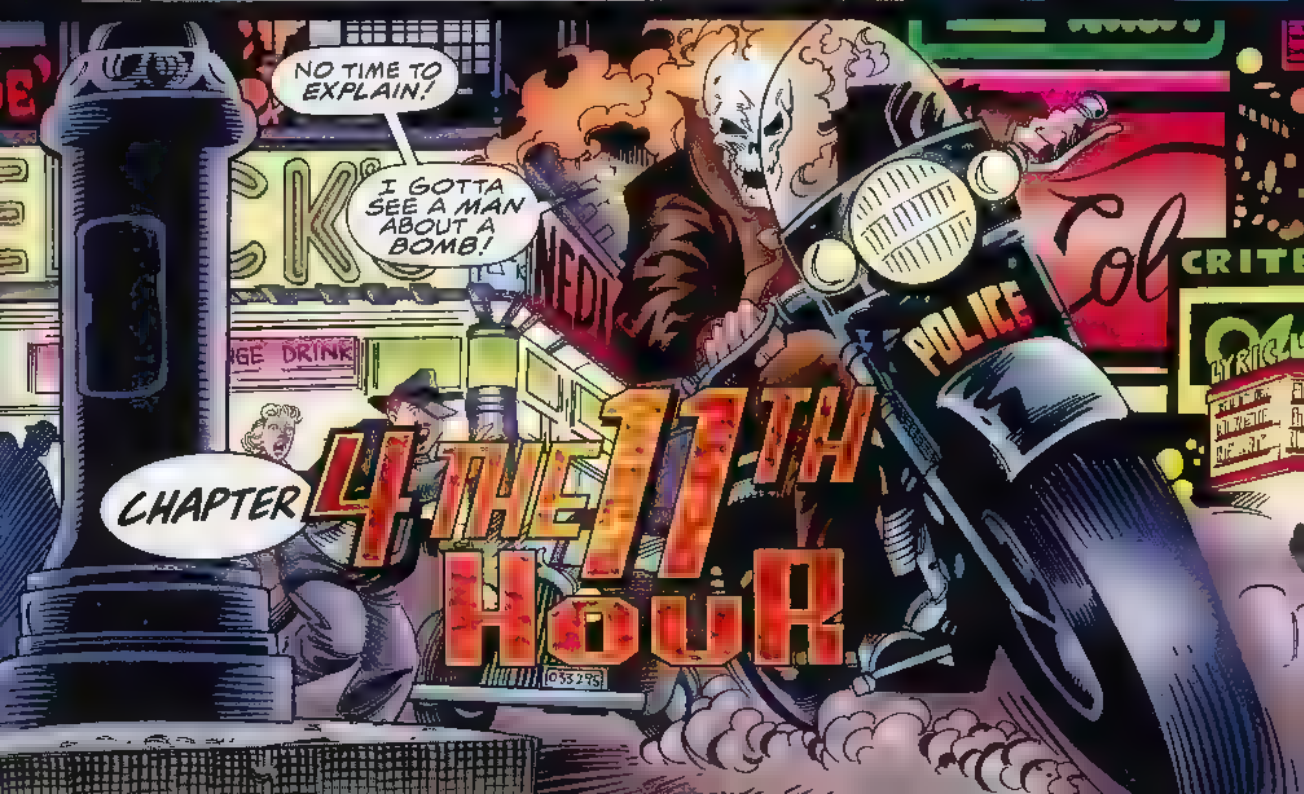
"THREW 'EM CLEAR... 2" OH, BROTHER!
WHO'S THIS STORY FOR, MARK? THE DAILY GLOBE OR TIMELY COMICS?
AW, PAY NO ATTENTION TO BABS, MR TODD, I THINK IT WAS JUST SWELL!
THANKS FOR THE VOTE A'CONFIDENCE THERE, VIRG.
QUESTION IS, WHAT DO YOU THINK, SCHMITTY? PAGE ONE MATERIAL?
YOU TELL ME, TODD.
PRESS
SEEMS ALL THIS SUPER-BUZZ-BOMB NONSENSE SIDETRACKED YOU FROM YOUR REAL STORY...
...CRACKIN' THE RATZI / AMERICAN SPY-RING!
YER RIGHT, CHIEF!
THE MINI-TRANSMITTERS WERE A RED HERRING!
AND IF FRITZ REALLY HAS A HIDDEN MISSILE BASE SOMEWHERE IN THE ATLANTIC...
"...ALL THEIR SECRET NETWORK HAS TO DO IS GET OUT ONE SET A' LAUNCH CODES...
"...AND WE CAN KISS THAT U.S. TARGET GOOD-BYE!
"WHAT'S THEIR ANGLE, BLAST IT?" WHAT?!

STAY TUNED TO WAKO, ALL YOU AGENTS OF THE NIGHT!
'CAUSE NEXT UP'S THE FURTHER ADVENTURES OF THE MASKED RAIDER!
TURN THAT DOWN, VIRG! I'M TRYIN' TO THINK...
VIRG?
HEY! WHERE DID YA GET THAT DISK?
IT'S JUST LIKE THE ONE THE RATZIS LEFT BEHIND ON LIBERTY ISLAND!
JEEPERS, MR TODD, IT'S A MASKED RAIDER SECRET DECODER RING!
EVERYBODY KNOWS THAT!
FOR THE LUVVA MIKE!
THIS NAZI CODE BOOK IS FULL'A AMERICAN LANDMARKS...
...'N' EACH ONE'S GOT A SIMPLE CODE WORD!
"ANY OF THOSE WORDS COULD BE SNUCK INTO A KID'S RADIO SHOW!
STUDIO
"THAT'S THE SECRET TO THE NAZI'S AMERICAN SPY-RING!
"AND THAT'S HOW THEY'RE SETTING THE TARGET FOR THE LAST V-3!"
WHY, IF IT AIN'T THE MASKED RAIDER HIMSELF!
HURRY UP! IT'S ALMOST AIR TIME!
SECRET
MASKED RAIDER

GREAT SCOTT! THEY'RE GONNA START!
I'M ON IT, CHIEF! YOU AND BABS GET ON THE HORN!
CALL THE STATION, THE POLICE, THE ARMY, THE LIBERTY LEGION...
...CALL PORKY PIG IF YA HAVE TO!
JUST STOP THAT SHOW!

HEY, MACK!
HOLD IT!
WHOA, WHERE'S THE FIRE, BUDDY?

SORRY, PAL
WHUMMF


NO TIME TO EXPLAIN!
I GOTTA SEE A MAN ABOUT A BOMB!
POLICE
CHAPTER 4
THE 11TH HOUR

BEWARE, EVIL-DOERS! HE'S HERE...
...THE MASKED RAIDER!
WAKO
MEANWHILE, ON A SMALL ISLAND IN THE ATLANTIC...
...AGENTS OF THE HIDDEN AXIS MISSILE BASE LISTEN IN.
NOW, GET READY, AGENTS OF THE NIGHT...
BECAUSE THE MASKED RAIDER HAS AN ENCODED MESSAGE, JUST FOR YOU!
ONE SIDE!
POLICE
SCREE
RRCH
HOT SOUP!
COMIN' THROUGH!
BUT FIRST, A WORD FROM OUR SPONSORS...
TOP OFF YOUR TANK WITH ROXXON
ON AIR

AND GIVE YOUR ENG NE A GLOW!
IT'S NO GOOD, SCHMITTY! ALL THE LINES ARE TIED!
Higgi
COME ON THEN, SISTER! TO THE STUDIO!
NOTHING WE CAN DO HERE!
NOW TRY TO KEEP YOUR SOCKS ON...
WAKO
YOU'RE DRIVIN' WITH GET-UP
'N' GO!
HOLY MOLEY!
KERASH

THE MASKED RAIDER SHOW?
NINETEENTH FLOOR
THANKS!
POLICE
ONCE AGAIN, I, THE MASKED RAIDER, TAKE THE AIR!
SO DRAW YOURSELVES CLOSER, MY AGENTS OF THE NIGHT...
QUITE AN AMUSING SHOW, EH, ELEANOR?
WELL, IT'S NO FIRESIDE CHAT, DEAR.
...FOR THE ELEVENTH HOUR APPROACHES...
...AND THERE ARE SECRETS TO REVEAL!

SET YOUR ENCRYPT-O-GRAPHS TO GAMMA 9!
POLICE
STALKS
SKRRT
SCREEE
GET YOUR PENCILS AND PAPER READY, AND WRITE THIS DOWN...
...TODAY'S SECRET MESSAGE IS...
ON AIR
SPKOWW
ACH!

GOTT IN HIMMEL!
POLICE
WUMP
SMAKK
KRASH!

BOY, I SURE HOPE THAT'S THE RIGHT GUY!
C#%!$
NEIN!
RRRRRRCHH
OH BOY, OH BOY, OH BOY!
WHAT?! WE'RE STILL ON THE AIR?!
UH...ONE MOMENT, KIDS...
STATUE OF LIBERTY
WHITE HOUSE!!
UMM...YOU'RE LISTENING TO WAKO...
AND THE MASKED RAIDER'S SECRET MESSAGE FOR TODAY IS...
GL GXXZQ G MGP CQQLE UVQ MIWUB GAGP

"UH...WAIT! I READ THE WRONG ONE!"
HANG IN THERE, OL' GLORY!
JUST GONNA SWING TO THAT LEDGE, AND--
VEET-VEET VEET
AW, CRUD! WHAT NOW?!
VEET VEET VEET
"IT'S THE TRANSMITTER I LIFTED OFF THOSE KRAUTS ON LIBERTY ISLAND!
"MUST'A LEFT IT IN MY POCKET THE WHOLE TIME!"
VEET VEET VEET
THAT MEANS FRITZ LAUNCHED THEIR V3...
...'N' IT'S HEADIN' THIS WAY!
OH, BROTHER! IF IT GOES OFF IN THE CITY--!
THAT PLANE! THAT'S THE TICKET!
HOPE SHE'S GASSED UP, UNLOCKED, AND HAS KEYS IN THE IGNITION!
AW, ONE LONGSHOT AT A TIME!
I STILL GOTTA GET TO THE DOCKS...

...'N' AS FAR AS I KNOW--
--THERE'S ONLY ONE THING IN NEW YORK--
--THAT CAN OUTRACE A RATZI BUZZ-BOMB...
TAXI!
TERS NUTS
RIVOLI
CREAM
TAXI
RATES
WHY, IF IT AIN'T THE BLAZIN' SKULL!
WHERE TO, MAC?
THE HARBOR..

...AND STEP ON IT!
TAXI
SCHMITTY, THE STUDIO'S BACK THAT WAY!
I KNOW, BABS. BUT TRUST THIS OLD NEWS-HOUND'S INSTINCTS--
--WE FOLLOW THESE COPPERS 'N' WE'LL GET TO THE BOTTOM OF THIS ONE!
HOT DOG!
IF THIS DON'T BEAT ALL!

I MIGHT JUST PULL THIS OFF!
OR DIE TRYIN'...
VEET VEET
CLAK CLAK CLAK
WELL. WHADDYA KNOW?
FULL TANK, 'N' SHE'S PURRIN' LIKE A KITTEN!
RUNNUNUUHHH
LUCKY ME.
WHRRRRRRR
EEEYOOOYYY
EYOOOO
SKRREEE
POLICE
THAT FLAMIN' FREAK! HE'S GETTIN' AWAY!
KNOCKED OUT A COP! STOLE HIS BIKE! 'N' PUSHED A MAN OUTTA WINDOW!
AIN'T FAIR!
HOW'S A CREEP LIKE THAT NOT GETTIN' WHAT'S COMIN' TO HIM?!

HOLY TOLEDO!
VEET VEET VEET
KERRCHOOOMM

OH MY!
B'GORRAH!
JEEPERS! WHU' HAPPENED, CHIEF?
BRAVE FOOL JUST LED THAT BOMB OUTTA THE CITY!
HE SAVED US ALL, KID! HE SAVED US ALL!
FELLAS, LOOK!
UP THERE, IT'S...
"...THE BLAZING SKULL!"
"HE MUST'VE BAILED OUT IN THE NICK A' TIME!
"AND THE FORCE OF THE BLAST THREW HIM CLEAR FROM THE EXPLOSION!
"I'M SEEIN' IT--
"--AND I STILL DON'T BELIEVE IT!"

QUICK! SAW HIM COME DOWN OVER HERE!
SPREAD OUT! HE CAN'T'VE GOTTEN FAR!
HEY!
I FOUND 'IM!
CAREFUL WHERE YOU POINT THAT THING, VIRG!
YA GOT ME DEAD TO RIGHTS!
AW, IT'S JUST MARK TODD!
ABOUT TIME YOU SHOWED UP!
SORRY, CHIEF... SEEMS I MISSED OUT ON THE BIG FINALE.
BUT I'M SURE BABS CAN FILL ME IN BEFORE PRESS TIME!
UNLESS YOU STILL THINK THERE'S NO STORY HERE.
TODD, RIGHT NOW I'M THINKING PAGE ONE!
LET ME TELL YA, FOLKS..
...THE THINGS I DO FOR A BYLINE!
"UVQ QLM!"

STORY – DAN SLOTT PENCILS – JAMES W. FRY III INKS – ANDREW PEPOY

LETTERS – JIM NOVAK COLORS – HEROIC AGE EDITOR – EVAN SKOLNICK

EDITOR IN CHIEF – BOBBIE CHASE

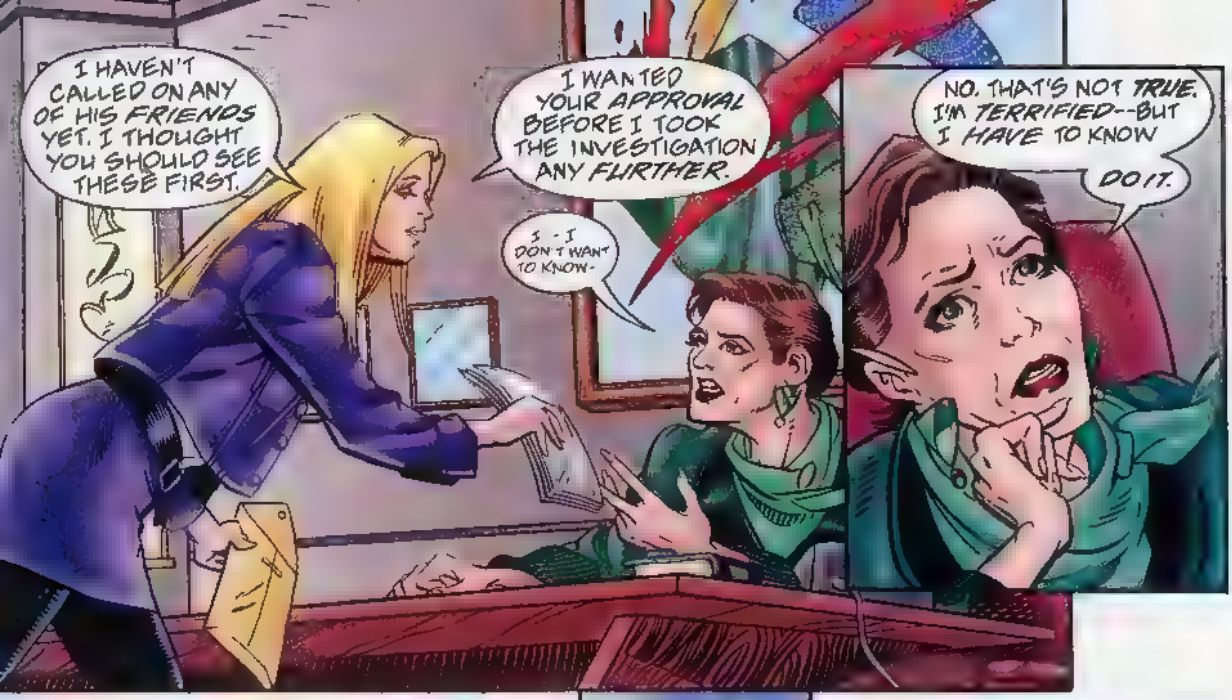
LITTLE MONSTERS
For more than two years as humans reckon time, I have waited here, at the place where the fringe of CHARLES BLACKWATER'S consciousness brushes the UNSEEN WORLD.
To one such as I, those years are but a moment.
To THE MASTER, whose intricate designs of evil I once served, the WHOLE OF TIME is but a moment.
Since sending the dragon FIN FANG FOOM to plague the world of men*, he has all but ignored humanity's doings--until now.
CAN YOU SENSE IT, CHARLES?
THE MASTER HAS DISPATCHED ANOTHER OF HIS MONSTERS.
A LITTLE ONE THIS TIME. PETTY, BUT VICIOUS
SENT NOT TO DESPOIL A WORLD, BUT TO WOUND A SINGLE SOUL...!
YOURS.
HE HAS FOUND A WAY TO HURT YOU
I'M COMING OUT, CHARLES.
* See Legion of Night. --C.C.
I WANT THE LITTLE ONE TO FEEL MY PRESENCE IN YOUR WORLD

STEVE GERBER	WRITER
ALAN HOPKINS	PENCILER
MARK MCKENNA	INKER
	WITH ASSISTS BY MICK GRAY
HEROIC AGE	COLORIST
LORETTA KROL	LETTERER
CHRIS COOPER	EDITOR
BOBBIE CHASE	EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

How strange it is to enter this world of mortals again
...To negotiate the stacks of walls and floors with which, in their unwitting arrogance, they presume to apportion the infinite.
As if any entity, even the Master, could claim more than fleeting dominion over--
EYES!!
THERE ARE EYES UPON ME
KCHIK ZWHRR KCHIK ZWHRR
..!

OH MY GOD-- I SEES ME! IT'S LOOKING STRAIGHT AT ME!
WHAT IN THE NAME OF HEAVEN IS IT--?!
AND WHY AM I POSITIVE IT REALLY HATES HAVING ITS PICTURE TAKEN?
I was r[illegible]taken
The Master has not ignored the human-
On the contrary--he has obviously been observing them
This time, he has chosen cunning over raw force His plan will be far more difficult to discern
For the little one will commit its havoc through the course of human events that are already in motion.

NEXT MORNING
THE OFFICE OF FASHION EDITOR ALLISON LAMB.
CASPAR WIGHT AND HIS GREAT-GRAND-DAUGHTER ARIANN. THEY RUN AN OCCULT BOOKSTORE IN THE VILLAGE.
JENNIFER KALE--A JUNIOR AT SEAVIEW COLLEGE IN L.A.
MARTIN GOLD--A WRITER FOR "CRUEL FATE" MAGAZINE.
CHAN LIH CHOW--PROFESSOR OF ANTHROPOLOGY, U.C. BERKELEY.
KATHERINE REYNOLDS--ANOTHER ACADEMIC FORMERLY PARA-PSYCHOLOGY.
ANY HANKY-PANKY GOING ON WITH THIS ONE?
SHE HAS A BOYFRIEND IN CALIFORNIA. THEY SEEM VERY HAPPY TOGETHER
WHATEVER CAME BETWEEN YOU AND BLACKWATER, MS. LAMB, I DOUBT IT WAS ANOTHER WOMAN.
THESE PEOPLE HE SURROUNDS HIMSELF WITH...
WHAT'S THE ATTRACTION? WHY HAS CHARLES ABANDONED ALL HIS OLD FRIENDS--AND ME--FOR THEM?
I DON'T KNOW YET. AND I'M WONDERING IF EITHER OF US WANTS TO KNOW.
I'M NOT SURE I UNDERSTAND...
I TOOK THESE LAST NIGHT--TELEPHOTO LENS THROUGH HIS OFFICE WINDOW.
ASIDE FROM THE FACT THAT YOUR EX-LOVER APPARENTLY UPCHUCKS DEMONS--
I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT THEY MEAN. OR WHAT HAPPENED NEXT.
TO BE HONEST, I TURNED AND RAN.


I HAVEN'T CALLED ON ANY OF HIS FRIENDS YET. I THOUGHT YOU SHOULD SEE THESE FIRST.
I WANTED YOUR APPROVAL BEFORE I TOOK THE INVESTIGATION ANY FURTHER.
I - I DON'T WANT TO KNOW-
NO. THAT'S NOT TRUE. I'M TERRIFIED--BUT I HAVE TO KNOW
DO IT.

RYKER'S ISLAND CORRECTIONAL FACILITY
THE GATE SWINGS OPEN, AFTER FOUR LONG YEARS, FOR ONE MORTON "BUDDY" K'LASSER.
KEEP YOUR KNUCKLES OUTTA YOUR OLD LADY'S FACE THIS TIME, BUDDY
WE DON'T WANT YOU BACK
.ZZAT RIGHT?
WELL, LEMME TELL YA--NAUSEA'S A TWO-WAY STREET.
I COULD GO MY WHOLE LIFE WIT'OUT EVER LOOKIN' AT YOUR PUKEFACE AGAIN.

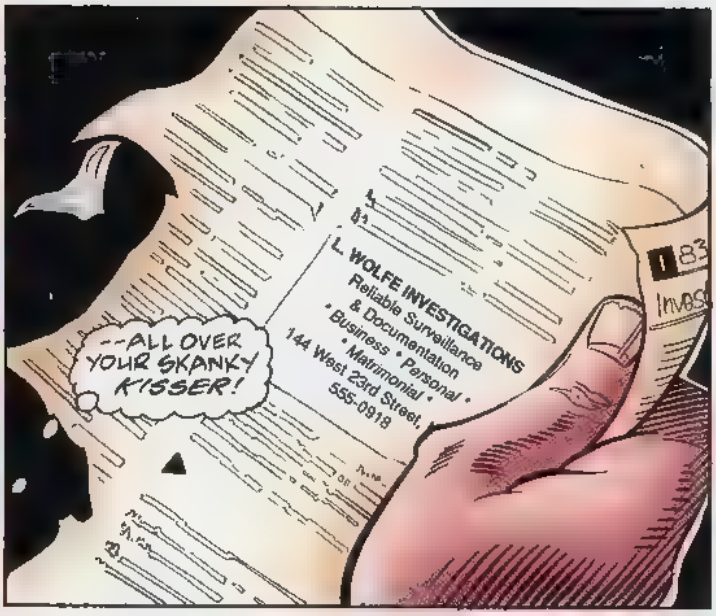
NEW YORK
SAME GOES FOR THAT SOW I MADE TH' MISTAKE' A MARRYIN'!
WOULDN'T DIRTY MY HANDS ON HER HOMELY KISSER!

BUT THAT OTHER PIECE'A--
hmm

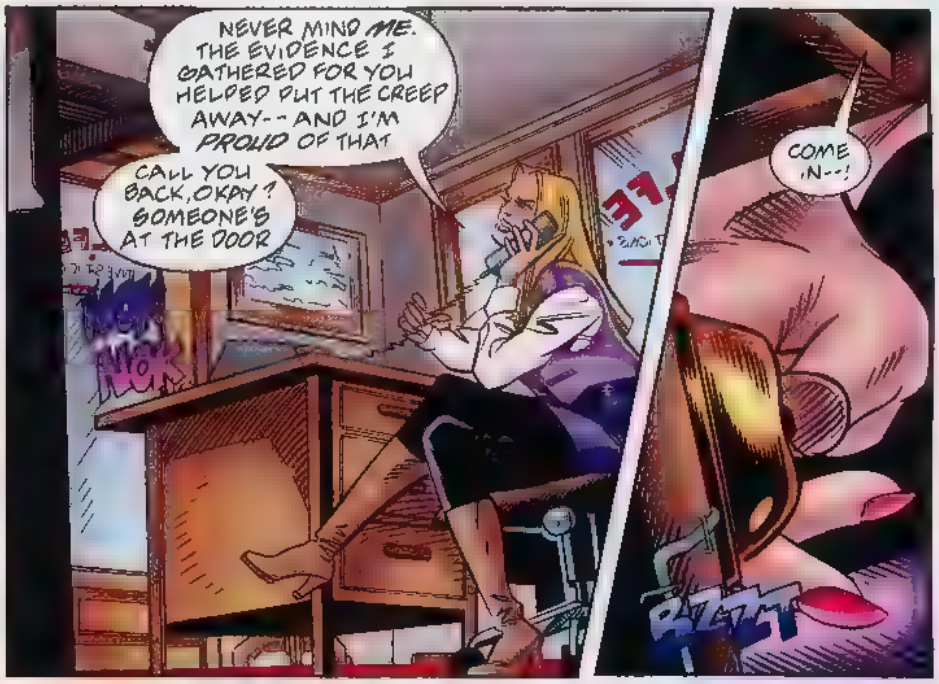
YEAH.
HER.
THE SKANK THAT PUT ME HERE!
HER BUTT NEEDS KICKIN'!

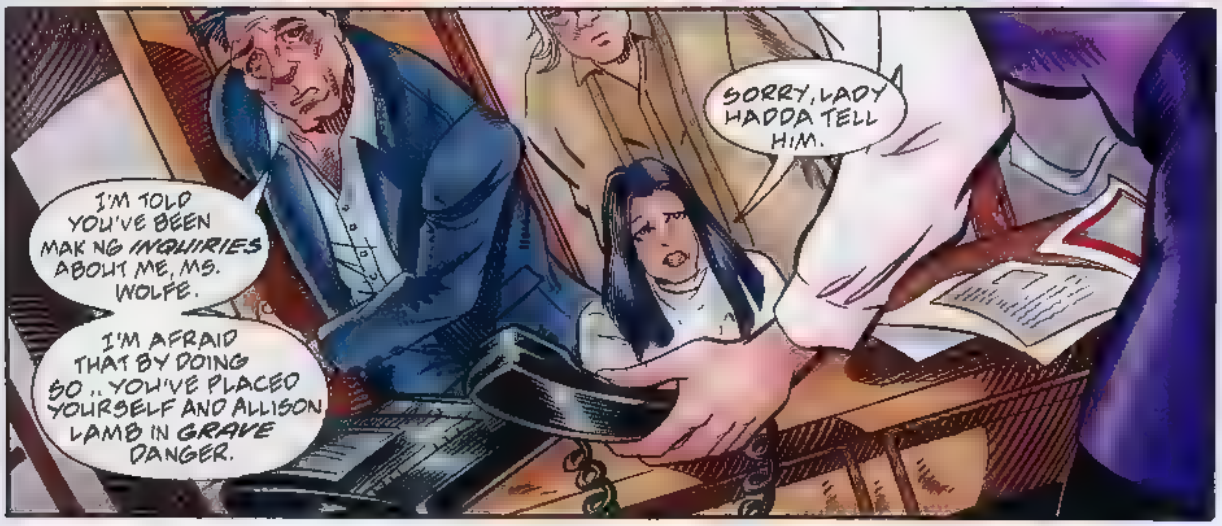
GREENWICH VILLAGE
THAMUZ
... CAN'T DO IT, LADY. WE'RE NOT ALLOWED TO TALK ABOUT HIM.
NOT 'ALLOWED'...? BY WHOM?
NOT ALLOWED TO SAY.
LIKE RUNNIN' BACKWARDS ON A MERRY-GO-ROUND, AIN'T IT?
YOU SHOULD TRY LIVIN' WITH HER
MR. WIGHT?
MY NAME IS LEENA WOLFE. I WANTED TO ASK YOU ABOUT--
I HEARD. CAN'T HELP YOU, MA'AM...
...ARIANN KNOWS BEST ABOUT THESE THINGS
WATCH OUT FOR KLASSER...
WHO--?.
MARIE KLASSER? WHAT DOES SHE HAVE TO DO WITH--?
NOT HER--THE HUSBAND. HE GOT OUT, AND HE'S REALLY MAD ABOUT THE PICTURES YOU TOOK
LET ME GUESS--I'VE BEEN SANDBAGGED, RIGHT? BLACKWATER'S INVESTIGATING THE INVESTIGATOR?
HUH?
OH--NO, MA'AM!
NOTHING LIKE THAT! ARIANN JUST... KNOWS THINGS SOMETIMES
UH-HUH. WELL, IF MY CLIENTS' PRIVACY HAS BEEN COMPROMISED MR. BLACKWATER IS GOING TO REGRET IT!
BE CAREFUL LADY.
HE'S REALLY CRAZY
GREAT. WHICH AM I SUPPOSED TO BELIEVE--THAT THE KID'S A MYSTIC--
--OR THAT I'M SO SLOPPY I CAN'T SPOT A TAIL ON ME?

ONE WAY
CLEAR FIRELANE FOR EMERGENCY VEHICLES
NO PARKING
SOME HOURS LATER, SOME BLOCKS NORTH
OOH BABY-- OOH, YEAH! THERE YOU ARE!
PHONE
PHONE
PHONE
911
911
GONNA LET MY FINGERS DO SOME WALKIN'--


L. WOLFE INVESTIGATIONS
Reliable Surveillance & Documentation
• Business • Personal •
• Matrimonial •
144 West 23rd Street
555-0918
--ALL OVER YOUR SKANKY KISSER!

144 West 23rd.
WOLFE
INVESTIGATIONS
NO, I DIDN'T KNOW THEY RELEASED HIM TODAY
WILL YOU BE ALL RIGHT, MARIE? DO YOU WANT ME TO--?


NEVER MIND ME. THE EVIDENCE I GATHERED FOR YOU HELPED PUT THE CREEP AWAY-- AND I'M PROUD OF THAT
CALL YOU BACK, OKAY? SOMEONE'S AT THE DOOR
COME IN--!
BZZT


I'M TOLD YOU'VE BEEN MAKING INQUIRIES ABOUT ME, MS. WOLFE.
I'M AFRAID THAT BY DOING SO .. YOU'VE PLACED YOURSELF AND ALLISON LAMB IN GRAVE DANGER.
SORRY, LADY HADDA TELL HIM.

AND NOW I--
:gnnek:
:raach:
YOU HAVE DONE YOUR PART, CHARLES
IT IS TIME FOR MS. WOLFE TO MEET ME..
...AND THE UNSEEN WORLD.
GET CHARLIE OUT--FAST!
CAN'T LET ANYBODY SEE HIM THIS WAY-- 'SPECIALLY NOT HER!
GIMME A HAND, THEN'
Shortly..
LEENA?
MS LAMB? IS THAT YOU?
OVER HERE.
YOU'RE DRUNK, AREN'T YOU?
WHA'--?
NO!
I NEVER DRINK ON THE JOB..SOMEONE CAME IN, I THINK, AND THEN... I DON'T... I WENT BLANK...!
YOU'D BETTER SIT DOWN.

KRRAASH
DON'T BOTHER, SKANK!
YA WON'T BE STANDIN' FOR LONG, ANYWAY!
HEY--NO!!
WHAT'RE YA DOIN'?! THIS'S THE WRONG ONE!
LEMME GET THE ONE I CAME FOR!
WHO GIVES A /*¢% ABOUT HER?!
MASTER? I AIN'T GOT NO MASTER!
YOU SHALL HAVE NEITHER, DEMON.

WHAT A GROTESQUE LITTLE BEAST YOU ARE...!
THE IDEAL MATCH FOR THIS HUMAN YOU WERE SENT TO POSSESS.
AAAAAA
YOU ARE ABOUT TO DIE FOR YOUR MASTER.
THIS IS YOUR MOMENT OF GLORY.
NAA HGGH REGRF
WHY DO YOU STRUGGLE SO FIERCELY, LITTLE ONE?
THIS IS WHAT YOU WERE BORN FOR.

NOW FLY, LITTLE BEAST!
WUNT
HREEK
AND WITH YOUR DYING SHRIEKS--
HNEEECH
PROCLAIM YOUR LOVE FOR THE MASTER!
POMF
KEEE
YOUR LOYALTY!
MY GOD... WHAT HAPPENED?
WHAT WAS ALL THIS--?!
AEEEFF
FOKK
YOUR GRATITUDE AT HAVING BEEN CHOSEN TO SERVE!

YOUR FIRST GLIMPSE OF THE UNSEEN WORLD.
IT WILL NOT BE YOUR LAST.
YOUR LIFE AND THAT OF MISS LAMB HAVE BEEN SPARED.
IN TIME, AN OPPORTUNITY WILL ARISE FOR YOU TO SHOW YOUR APPRECIATION.
WHAT? HOW--?
YOU WILL BE CALLED TO AID THE CAUSE OF THE LEGION OF NIGHT. DO NOT REFUSE.
AND DO NOT TAKE THIS WARNING LIGHTLY.
UH, NO...NO, I DON'T...!
THAT IS WISE.
FOR THOUGH THE FORCES OF THE UNSEEN ARE CAPABLE OF COMPASSION...
...THEIR WRATH KNOWS NO BOUNDS.
HELP
END